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ABSTRACT

Underage drinking presents a serious health risk not only to young people themselves but to entire communities. This program guide is designed to help communities establish their own underage drinking prevention programs. Community norms, actions, and attitudes toward alcohol affect young people, as do the ways in which alcohol is promoted. Solutions to illegal drinking are dependent on the entire community working together to create healthy environments in which young people can make the right choices. This guide will help community organizers develop special events which encourage healthy lifestyle choices. Some of the issues addressed here include the delivery of messages at special events, implementing a teen drinking prevention program event, developing an effective partnership with event organizers, selecting event activities, creating a mini-event, making materials for the program, and ensuring a safer event for young people. Also described are programs in four cities which promoted teenage abstinence from alcohol. (RJM)

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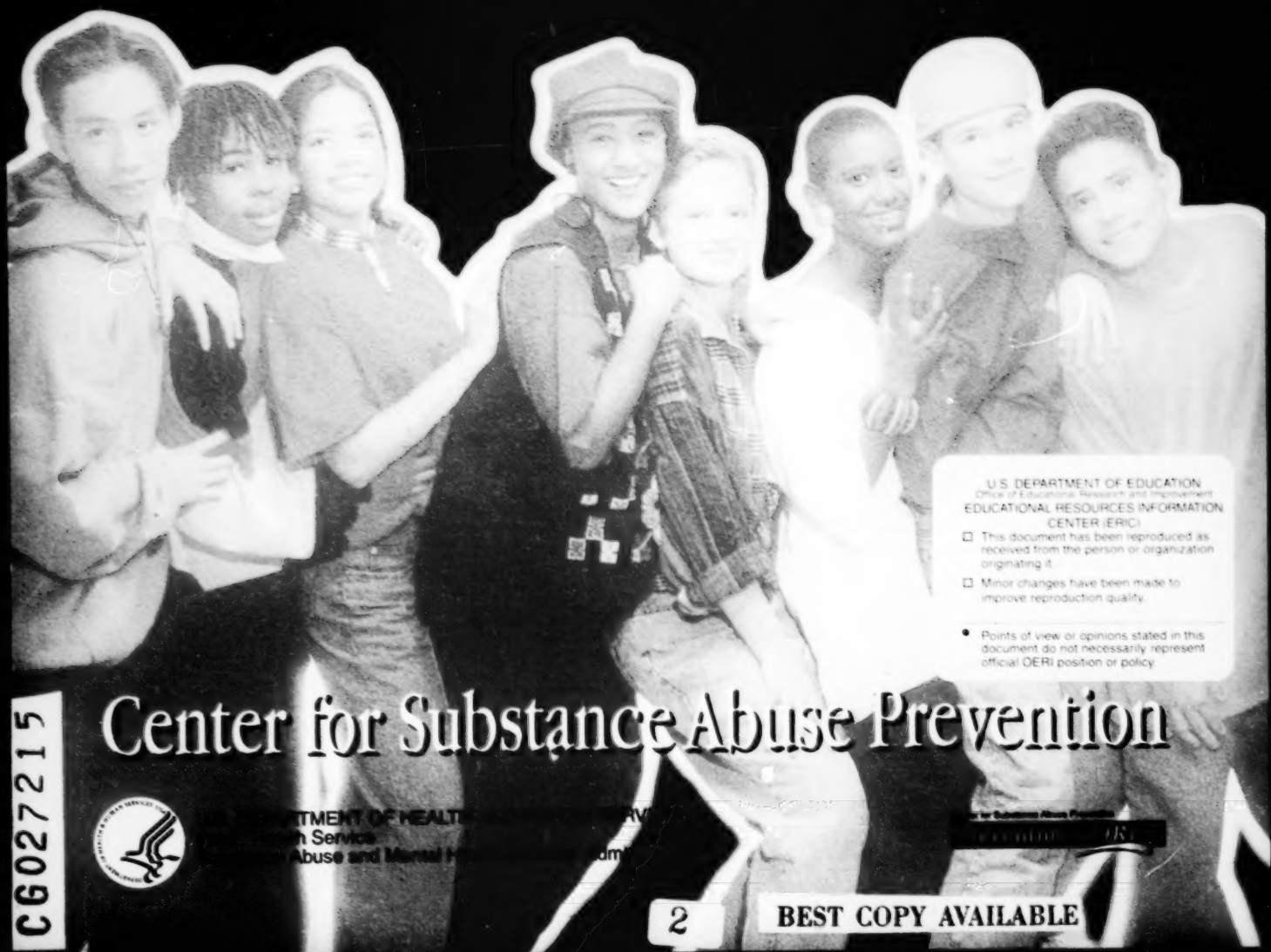
Teen Drinking Prevention Program

Event Action Guide



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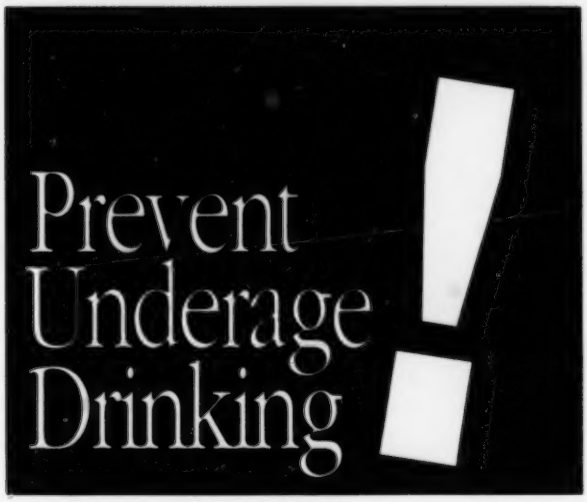

Know The Facts.
Prevention WORKS!

Message From the Director

Welcome to the *Event Action Guide* of SAMSHA's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention's (CSAP) Teen Drinking Prevention Program. This program's goal is to help you acquire the skills and knowledge to help your community establish an underage drinking prevention program specifically designed to meet its needs.

Underage drinking presents a serious health risk not only to young people themselves but to entire communities because the consequences of this drinking are seen on our highways and in our schools. CSAP's years of prevention work have taught us the all-important role of family and community and their influence on the behavior and choices of young people. Community norms, actions, and attitudes toward alcohol very much affect young people, as do the ways in which alcohol is promoted. The solutions lie in entire communities working together to create healthy environments in which our young people can make the right choices, grow, and mature.

The CSAP Teen Drinking Prevention Program is based on innovative public health techniques and has four objectives:

- Raising public awareness of the underage drinking crisis.
- Changing community norms that encourage underage drinking.
- Creating community-specific prevention messages and materials.
- Ensuring that special events in a community encourage healthy lifestyle choices.

This *Event Action Guide* can help you and your community implement steps to reach the fourth objective.

My thanks in advance for your participation.

Elaine M. Johnson, Ph.D.
Director, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Table of Contents

Introduction 3

Prevention Programs 4

Special Events and Healthy Lifestyle Choices: What Is the Connection? . . . 4
Special Events in Your Community 4
How Are Messages Delivered at Special Events? 5
Implementing Your Teen Drinking Prevention Program Event Initiative . . . 7
Developing an Effective Partnership With Event Organizers 8
Selecting Your Event Activity 8
Creating Your Own Mini-event 9
Creating Your Own Exhibit and/or Materials 9
Creating a Safer Event for Young People 10
Albuquerque, New Mexico 11
Memphis, Tennessee 12
San Jose, California 13
Detroit, Michigan 14

Music can be a focus of alcohol-free events.

Special events are celebrations, and they should be about having fun. That fun, however, does not have to involve alcohol and, in the case of young people under age 21, it should not.

Prevention programs and program organizers can do many things to help event organizers address the problem of underage drinking. This *Event Action Guide* will help you understand how special events work, how messages are delivered through special event marketing and advertising, what the roles of public and private sponsors are, and what alcohol seller-server practices are at special events.

Special events can be exciting, fun ways to deliver a message to large audiences. Special events deliver all kinds of messages—they can also deliver prohealth and safety messages! Prevention organizations can be active participants in existing special events and can increase community wide concern about underage drinking by using the event's marketing and message delivery opportunities to spread the "no-use under 21" message.

Special Events and Healthy Lifestyle Choices: What Is the Connection?

In almost every town and city across the country, people are joining together to celebrate their history, economy, culture, or significant achievements by organizing special events.

Special events are an integral part of the public life of most American cities and communities. Undoubtedly, you and members of your family have attended or participated in many special events in your community. They occur throughout the year and attract people of all ages.

These events bring together large audiences, help promote civic pride, and build community spirit while serving as a wholesome source of recreation and entertainment for your entire community.

You will notice that celebrations are a large part of many special events. Celebrations go hand in hand with having a good time. But that does not mean that abusing alcohol must be part of the mix; for young people under age 21, alcohol should not be part of the mix at all.

Unfortunately, at many special events where alcoholic beverages are served, high-powered marketing and sales techniques combined with easy access result in underage drinking. Often, event organizers are unaware of underage drinking at their events. If they are aware of the problem, they most likely would welcome assistance in dealing with it. Achieving a healthy event in the community is good for the event, good for the event sponsors, and good for the community. To reach that goal, all participants must work together.

Special Events in Your Community

Special events can take many forms and are as varied as the people and communities that organize them. Every community has special events, including your community. Consider each special event held in your town or city as an opportunity for your prevention organization to tie its prohealth and safety message into the overall theme and message of the event. For example, a patriotic Fourth of July celebration can also become a safe and patriotic Fourth. "Safe" can translate into not only the safe use of fireworks by adults only, but the prevention of drinking by youth at the event as well.

Special events come in all shapes and sizes. They include the following:

- ❒ concerts
- ❒ festivals
- ❒ fairs
- ❒ parades
- ❒ rallies
- ❒ shows
- ❒ sports activities, fun runs, volleyball marathons, etc.
- ❒ rodeos
- ❒ pow wows
- ❒ fiestas
- ❒ neighborhood block parties
- ❒ carnivals
- ❒ cultural celebrations
- ❒ national holiday celebrations
- ❒ regional specialty product celebrations
- ❒ religious celebrations

Each special event held in your community will have its own unique goals and objectives as well as a specific target audience, which could be narrow or broad. These goals usually include attracting a large number of people to the event, gaining media coverage of the event, and delivering the target audience that the event sponsor wants to reach. Additionally, most events have a few goals that are similar to the goals of your prevention organization. Those goals include holding a safe and secure event, achieving an enjoyable time for *all* attendees, maintaining a positive image for the community, and upholding all local alcohol beverage control (ABC) laws. These last objectives provide your prevention organization its best opportunity to work with and influence an event.

The first step in preparing to work with event organizers in your community is to learn about and observe events taking place in the community. Learn what events are taking place and who is sponsoring and organizing them. Become an "events watcher."

Community events come in all shapes and sizes—just like the people who attend them.

How Are Messages Delivered at Special Events?

There are many ingenious ways in which event organizers, companies, and marketers deliver effective messages to audiences at special events. There may be thousands of visitors per day at an event. So it is important that your message be easily understood by people who are in constant motion and who stop only briefly to be entertained, look at a colorful exhibit, play a game, purchase a snack, and so forth. Your delivery must compete with the many other colorful, noisy, action-filled activities and promotions that create successful special events.

Remember, very few people are going to read a pamphlet, listen to a speech, or look at your exhibit unless it is startling, eye catching, and unusual.

As you begin to formulate your strategy to work with special events, you need to understand how events are funded and the role of sponsorships in the overall revenue structure of the event. Understanding and being sensitive to the relationship among an event, its organizers, and its sponsors will help your organization work positively and effectively with that event. The

Be an Events Watcher!

❒ Identify events taking place in your community by checking local newspapers, listening to the radio, and watching television.

❒ Identify the organizers and sponsors of these events.

❒ Attend or have other members of your prevention group attend as many of the events as you can.

❒ Note how messages are delivered at these events, the signage, billboards, product giveaways, public address announcements, and so on.

❒ See if alcoholic beverages are sold at the event. Notice who sponsors the event.

❒ If alcoholic beverages are sold, see if nonalcoholic alternatives also are readily available and marketed.

❒ See if IDs are carefully checked at the alcohol sales points to ensure that only persons over age 21 are making purchases.

❒ Observe the consumption of alcoholic beverages by the crowd. Who does the majority of the drinking at the event?

❒ Look for the participation of any prohealth or other community-based organization in the event. How are they attempting to deliver their messages? Are they effective?

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ultimate goal is to devise an effective strategy that allows the event organizers and sponsors to meet their objectives while also setting in place practices and procedures that eliminate underage drinking and encourage healthy lifestyle choices.

Many older special events were originally sponsored by local governments or government agencies. However, today, more and more events are sponsored by private groups and/or businesses.

So you can see, sponsorships play a large role in the viability of many special events. Therefore, it is particularly important to event organizers that sponsors are kept happy and interested.

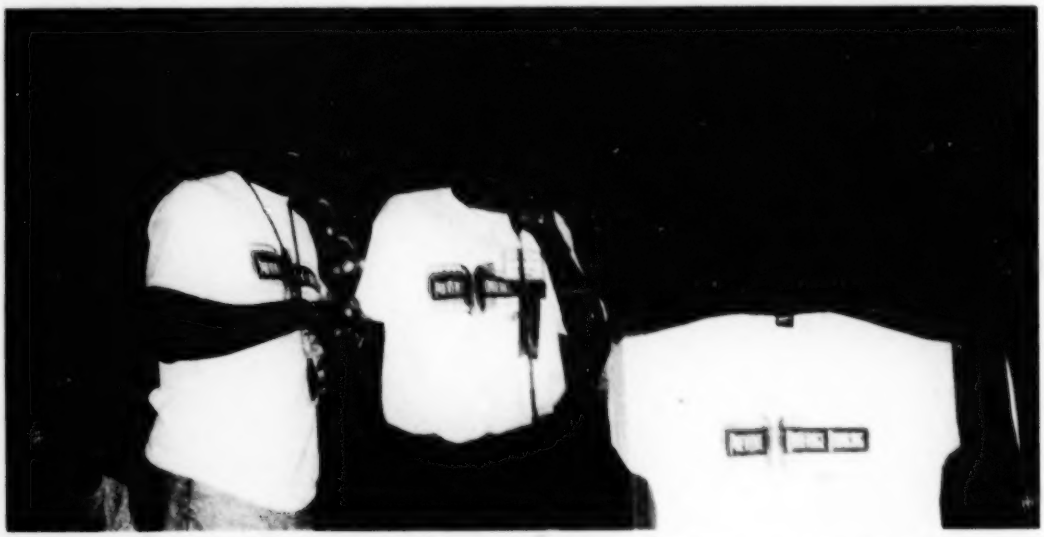
Corporate America has recognized the unique advertising and marketing opportunity that special events offer. Companies use events to test or introduce new products, bolster brand awareness, or strengthen their place in the community. Consumer products of all types and kinds have found special events a valuable marketing arena. Many product manufacturers become event sponsors either by paying a fee to event organizers or by donating all or a percentage of their onsite product sales to the event. If the latter is the case, it is in everyone's interest that the product achieve strong sales and the marketing of the product be prominent and aggressive.

Special events pay their bills by all or some combination of the following:

- ❒ sponsorships (grants)
- ❒ food, crafts, carnival vendor fees
- ❒ exhibitor fees
- ❒ admission charges
- ❒ souvenir sales
- ❒ in-kind services and donations

Community events are very popular marketing opportunities among alcohol manufacturers and distributors. Most beer companies, for example, sponsor such events. The industry has a long history of special event sponsorship, representing one of the largest single sources of sponsorship dollars for special events across the country.

Alcoholic beverage sponsorships are usually found at the largest, most popular events held in our communities. In sponsoring such events, the beverage distributor can imprint its image in the community and get people to sample and buy the product.



Entertainment with a message is the goal of many community events.

A sponsoring company may also need to be concerned with possible negative consequences because of its involvement. These possible consequences include public intoxication, underage drinking, and violation of local ABC laws.

Understanding what event sponsors want to achieve through their association with the event, as well as what they do not want to have happen, will help you build a relationship with the sponsor and win it over to the prohealth and safety message. Simply put, you can help the event sponsor avoid negative consequences and achieve your own goal of an event free of underage consumption at the same time.

Implementing Your Teen Drinking Prevention Program Event Initiative

Now that you have a basic understanding of the ways in which events are organized and paid for, it is time to consider how special events within your community can become part of your underage drinking prevention campaign.

Once you have narrowed down your choices, study the event you think would be the best match with your campaign and begin to specifically define what you would hope to accomplish through your involvement with it. Consider the following possibilities:

Strategy #1—Assist event organizers in the prevention of underage drinking at the event.

Considerations: What are the current seller-server policies at the event and do they work? If seller-server policies are needed, what practices would you recommend? Can your group help provide seller-server training? Can you provide volunteers to perform ID checks at the event?

Strategy #2—Deliver prohealth and safety messages at a special event where alcoholic beverages are served.

Considerations: What, if any, prohealth or safety activities are there at the event? What form of message delivery will be most effective in reaching your audience? Who is your target audience for the event? How much will it cost to carry out your activity at the event?

Define Your Objective/ Choose Your Strategy

Before launching your event initiative, you must carefully define your objectives to ensure that they are consistent with the overall goals of your prevention program.

Take some time to define what your organization wants to accomplish through its event initiative. Answer the following questions:

❒ How does your event initiative fit into and complement your overall program goals?

❒ What specific prevention messages does your organization want to deliver to the community through the event?

❒ Does the event attract a large audience, and is it the right audience for your message?

When you have answered these questions to your satisfaction and begin to look at a specific event you feel your group should be involved with, there are more questions that will need answers before you decide on a strategy:

❒ Has the event successfully involved community groups and nonprofit groups in its activities previously? Will such groups be involved again this year?

❒ Does the event lend itself to the creation of mini-events within the event? Could your organization perhaps sponsor a mini-event?

❒ What resources will your organization need to carry out the event initiative—funding, staffing, and so on?

Strategy #3—Deliver your prohealth and safety message at a special event where alcohol is not served.

Considerations: What audience does the event deliver? What other messages are part of the event?

Strategy #4—Decrease onsite visibility of alcoholic beverage advertising at special events.

Considerations: What agreement does the sponsor have with the event organizer concerning onsite ads and promotions? What other means can the sponsor use to build good community relations?

Strategy #5—Confine alcoholic beverage sales to a specific and limited location within the special event.

Considerations: What prearranged agreements does the sponsor have with the event organizer? Does the event location lend itself to such a single serving area strategy?

Developing an Effective Partnership With Event Organizers

As you have read, there are many strategies and activities that prevention organizations can create as part of a special event. The success of all these efforts will depend on your organization's ability to work cooperatively with event sponsors and managers.

When forging a working relationship with event organizers, remember that your role is not as an adversary. The people who create and support special events within your community want to maintain good community relations and provide safe and enjoyable entertainment for everyone. You want the event to achieve these same goals as well. By working together, you can help each other.

If your community has an underage drinking problem that needs increased visibility—and virtually all communities do—the event can assist the community by bringing your programming and messages to the audience. If the event itself has unintentionally encouraged underage drinking in the past, you can help those in charge of the event eliminate that problem.

Selecting Your Event Activity

The activity or activities your group decides to sponsor within the larger context of the community event should complement both your overall prevention objectives and the design and audience of the event.

Generally, there are four types of activities that are recommended for prohealth and safety messages:

Prominent no-use messages should be a part of any event.

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- Produce your own mini-event within the larger event. This mini-event could be performance-based such as a skit or a rap/dance performance. Its content should be designed to entertain and educate.
- Produce your own exhibit, printed material, or onsite signage.
- Work with event organizers to help develop and enforce new policies and procedures to eliminate underage drinking at the event.

Points to Remember When Meeting With Event Organizers

- ❒ Do your homework before the meeting. Understand the system of message delivery at the event. Know who the event sponsors are and what they want to achieve.
- ❒ Have a clear set of objectives you wish to accomplish by working with the event. Be prepared to explain what you hope to achieve and how.
- ❒ Help those people associated with the event better understand the teen drinking crisis, its causes, and what they can do about it. If increased awareness is the only benefit of your meeting, it will be worthwhile!
- ❒ Invite event organizers and sponsors to become part of your prevention team.
- ❒ If your research has revealed an underage drinking problem at the event, share your observations with the organizers. Offer your group's assistance in solving this problem. Offer cooperation, not confrontation.
- ❒ If you want to deliver prohealth and safety messages at the event, share that interest with the organizers and ask for their suggestions on how to most effectively deliver those messages.
- ❒ Develop a plan of action in connection with the event manager. Establish clear responsibilities, tasks, and a timetable.
- ❒ Be patient, flexible, and willing to adjust your plans.
- ❒ Evaluate your work after the event takes place. Let the event organizers know of your interest in being part of the next year's event as well, and apply what you learned in the evaluation to the next year's activity.

- Decrease the amount of alcoholic beverage advertising at the event—if it is an event attended largely by youth.

Creating Your Own Mini-event

One of the most visible means of delivering your prevention message at a special event is to stage your own "info-mance"—that is, information + performance. The following examples are mini-events that prevention groups around the country have created within larger community events:

- Create a mini-health fair—complete with exhibits, discussion groups, health screenings and literature, and souvenir giveaways.
- Develop your own performance group—negotiate with event organizers to include your own health performance group as part of the staged presentations of the festival. Performance groups can include dancers, theater groups, or rappers.
- Create your own street performance group—this group may not yet be ready for the main stage, but they can have fun and deliver an important message. Ask event organizers to allow your performance group to work as "street performers," entertaining at curbside or in walkways. Street performers can be especially effective using colorful costumes, aerobics, singing, roller blading, and so forth.

Creating Your Own Exhibit and/or Materials

Typically, many nonprofit groups hand out literature and sign up volunteers at special events. This type of activity is not interesting. In order to attract a crowd, be creative, colorful, and noisy. The following ideas may be of help:

- Create your own exhibit area by hanging colorful prohealth and safety posters and blowup photos or by creating murals.
- Use life-size cutouts of mannequins wearing your prevention message hats, T-shirts, and so on.

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- Use a small public address system or bull horn and play popular music or recite prohealth poetry or raps.
- Give out lots of colorful posters, pamphlets, flyers, and stickers with your prohealth message.
- Have interactive games, puzzles, banners, questionnaires, or pledge cards for use by event attendees.
- Work with event organizers to hang your own large, colorful banner in a highly visible location at the festival.
- Work with event organizers to have periodic public address announcements declaring the event alcohol safe for minors; create your own prohealth and safety slogans for the announcer's use as well.

Creating a Safer Event for Young People

If your events-watcher research revealed a problem with underage drinking at a special event, a good opportunity exists for your group to make a significant impact on this problem. Begin your work with event organizers well in advance. Critical to the success of your efforts will be the building of an effective partnership with the event organizers. Discuss the following options with the event managers:

- Improving seller-server policies at the event by including mandatory ID checks for *all* purchasers, limiting the number of purchases per person, and instituting penalties for event staff who do not enforce the rules.
- Instituting seller-server training for event staff working with beverage sales. It is important that the event staff develop a recognition of the problem of underage drinking. Specifics of staff training should include how to spot a fake ID and how to manage youth who attempt to purchase alcohol at the event.
- Setting up comprehensive carding/screening devices such as separate stations for ID checks and for beverage pouring at points of purchase, double ID checks by two separate staff members, and the presence of uniformed security at the sales stations.
- Reducing the number of alcohol sales points at the event—your specific suggestion to the event manager should include elimi-

The sale of alcohol at any community event should be strictly controlled.

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nating alcohol beverage sales near event activities designed for children and teenagers or instituting a "beer garden" approach where all sales of alcohol are confined to one area.

- Reducing the number of hours when alcohol is sold. Sales can begin 1 or 2 hours after the event opens and end 1 or 2 hours before it closes. Work with event organizers to declare a "Drug-Free Day" at the event. On this day, no alcohol of any kind would be sold at the event. Combine this day with your prevention messages and activities.

Special events are wonderful, enjoyable ways for communities to deliver their pro-health and safety messages. It is important for prevention agencies and organizations to be proactive with the special events in their community. These events are an excellent way to increase the overall community's concern regarding underage drinking and use existing event marketing opportunities to advertise the no-use message.

Albuquerque, New Mexico

A Day Free of Alcohol Is Fair

The Albuquerque Teen Drinking Prevention Program has worked successfully with the organizers of the New Mexico State Fair to ensure that the fair's Drug-Free Day was truly drug free. It all began last year when a member of the Albuquerque group attended the Drug-Free Day at the State Fair but noticed that beer was being sold. She attempted to discuss this contradiction with the event organizers but was unable to get their attention. Her concerns did, however, receive attention from numerous local television and radio stations. Since then the Albuquerque prevention group and the State Fair committee have worked together to ensure that this year's Drug-Free Day is really drug free.

Protest To Ring Fairgrounds
Group Plans Human Chain To Back Alcohol-F
Brave teen brings down a N.M. giant
Editorials
Limiting Alcohol Sales
Fair concessionaire dumped; charges fly
Alcohol sales to be limited
State Fair Puts Cork in Evening Liquor Sales
Lawmaker Finds Free Lodging With Lobbyist
March for a Dry Day

Newspaper reprints from Albuquerque, New Mexico

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Memphis Alcohol-Free Jamboree

Memphis, Tennessee

Alcohol-Free Jamboree

Memphis, Tennessee's Teen Drinking Prevention Program planned and implemented a day-long Alcohol Free Jamboree, which included a youth parade, talent show, exhibits, and displays. The parade, led by a 16-year-old grand marshall, started at the Pyramid Coliseum downtown and ended at the Convention Center. More than 25 acts involving 400 youth and adults were covered by three television stations, five radio stations, and the city's major newspapers. In addition to the considerable media coverage of the event's message discouraging underage alcohol consumption, an abundance of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug information was distributed at this highly successful jamboree.

San Jose, California

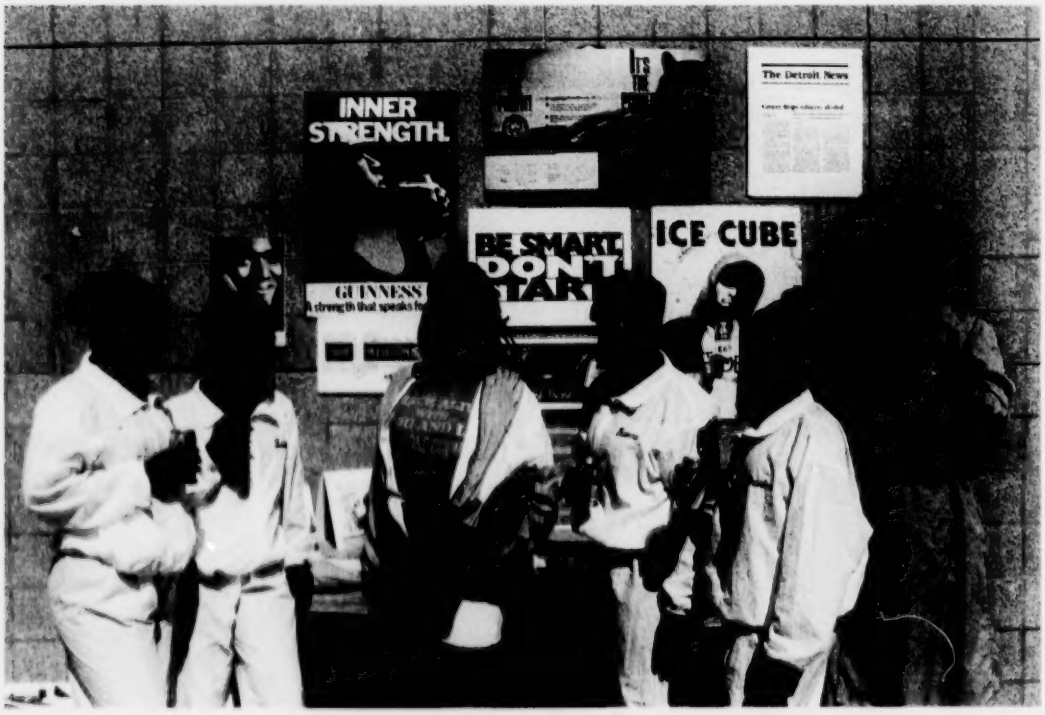
Jazz Festival

Youth involved in the San Jose Teen Drinking Prevention Program selected their local jazz festival to disseminate information about their campaign. Negotiations with event organizers beforehand made working with the jazz festival a success for all involved. The theme of the San Jose campaign was "Yes, I Choose to be Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Free!"

Detroit, Michigan

Underage Drinking Prevention Exhibit, African World Festival

Detroit's Teen Drinking Prevention Program was concerned with the abundance of alcohol advertising that appeals to young people under the legal drinking age. At the Detroit African World Festival, which draws more than 40,000 people, teens mounted an exhibit to draw attention to their issue. They took shifts staffing the exhibit and used the opportunity to talk to community members about underage drinking and to pass out literature about their campaign to reduce teen drinking.



For more information about alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse prevention, contact the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, P.O. Box 2345, Rockville, MD 20847-2345, 1-800-729-6686, 301-468-2600, or TDD 1-800-487-4889.

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